



1992

# THE AUSTRALIAN LABOUR MARKET

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**THE AUSTRALIAN  
LABOUR MARKET  
1992**

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## Introduction

Every month the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) delivers new insights into the Australian labour market from its monthly labour force survey.

While the main focus of the major publications of labour force data is usually change to the unemployment rate or the level of employment or unemployment, there are numerous other aspects which are of interest. More detailed information is available in a variety of media, including *Statistics Weekly* - an ABS publication which summarises the highlights of ABS recent releases.

Over a series of issues, *Statistics Weekly* presents many summary articles on the nature and the dynamics of the labour market. They describe the results of the Monthly Labour Force Survey and associated supplementary surveys. This publication presents a compilation of those articles, published during 1992 or early in 1993. They illustrate the wide range of information available from the ABS labour statistics program.

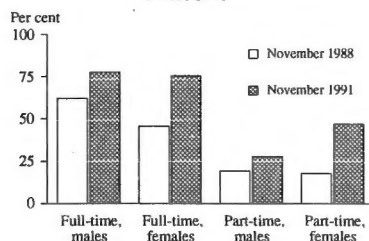
The topics covered are many and varied. They range over the state of the labour market; the demographic characteristics of the working age population; the nature of employment; job search experience of the unemployed; a comparison of the Australian unemployment rate to that of other OECD countries and several other dimensions of the labour market and the characteristics of people in it.

Much more detail on these topics is available. More information about the products and services offered by the ABS from the labour statistics program can be obtained by contacting any ABS office listed on page 26.



## Superannuation: sharp rise in level of coverage

**SUPERANNUATION COVERAGE OF EMPLOYED PERSONS**



Superannuation coverage for employed persons rose to 71 per cent in November 1991 from 51 per cent in November 1988.

Results from a household survey of superannuation in November 1991 showed that 5,480,200 persons aged 15 to 74 were covered by a superannuation scheme.

Coverage is strongly related to whether people are employed full-time or part-time (see table below). Some 85 per cent of full-time employees were covered by superannuation, compared with 50 per cent of part-time employees.

**SUPERANNUATION COVERAGE OF EMPLOYED PERSONS, NOVEMBER 1991**  
Per cent

Status of worker	Full-time			Part-time		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Employers	58	41	54	43	37	39
Self-employed	48	26	44	20	20	20
Employees	86	83	85	33	54	50
All workers	80	77	79	29	48	44

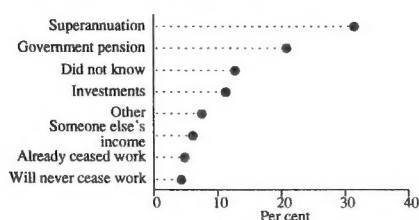
Wage and salary earners reported a superannuation coverage rate of 78 per cent. In comparison, 52 per cent of employers and 37 per cent of persons self-employed were contributing to a superannuation scheme.

In terms of industries, wage and salary earners in the communication industry had the highest level of superannuation coverage for full-time (98%) and for part-time workers (66%), while for the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry, full-time (69%) and part-time workers (29%), had the lowest levels of coverage.

Superannuation was expected to be the main source of income after retirement for one-third of employees aged 45 to 74 years covered by superannuation (see graph at left). A further 23 per cent expected a government pension to be their main source of income and 13 per cent did not know what their main source of income would be.

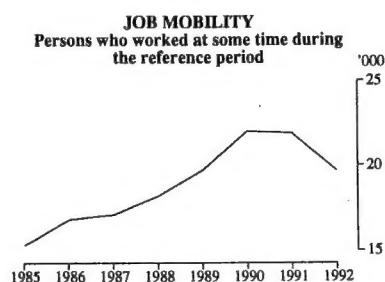
For further information, order the publication *Superannuation, Australia (6319.0)*, or contact Mark Patton (06) 252 7204.

**EXPECTED MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME AFTER  
CEASING FULL-TIME WORK**  
November 1991





## Fewer people changing jobs



The trend towards greater job mobility in the Australian labour force halted in the year ending February 1991, and was reversed in the year ending February 1992.

The proportion of workers who were job mobile — that is, they changed their employer/business or locality over a one year period — increased from 14 per cent in the year ending February 1984 to 22 per cent in the years ending February 1990 and 1991. However during the year ending February 1992, the number of job mobile workers fell to 20 per cent of persons who worked at some time during the year.

Of these 1,690,300 job mobile persons, 84 per cent changed their employer/business, including 2 per cent who changed their job more than once, involving both a change of employer/business, and a change of locality. The other 16 per cent changed locality but not employer/business.

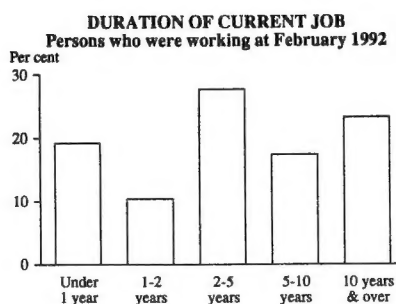
Some other findings from the 1992 Labour Mobility survey include:

- ☐ Job mobility ratios were similar for males and females (19% and 20% respectively).
- ☐ Job mobility was greatest (28%) for persons aged 20 to 24 years and least (9%) for those aged 55 to 69.
- ☐ Married persons were less job mobile than those who were not married (18% compared with 23%).

There were 8,564,100 persons aged 15 to 69 who worked at some time during the year ending February 1992. Of these people, 1,832,300, or 21 per cent, ceased a job during the year.

### PERSONS WHO CEASED A JOB DURING THE YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 1992 (<sup>'000</sup>)

Reason for ceasing last job	Males	Females	Persons
Job leaver (voluntary)	507.6	514.1	1,021.7
Job loser (involuntary)	488.9	321.6	810.5
Retrenched	359.0	188.5	547.5
Other reasons including own ill health or injury	129.9	133.2	263.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>996.7</b>	<b>835.7</b>	<b>1,832.3</b>



Of the people who ceased a job during the year, 56 per cent were job leavers, while 44 per cent were job losers. The majority (68%) of job losers were retrenched.

The proportion of those persons working at the time of the survey who had worked in their current job for less than one year, had fallen from 28 per cent in 1989 to 20 per cent in 1992. Over the same period, the proportion of persons who had been in their current job for two or more years has risen from 60 per cent in 1989, to 70 per cent in 1992.

For further information, order the publication *Labour Mobility, Australia (6209.0)*, or contact Jon Havelock (06) 252 6503.

## Qualified people also feel effects of increased unemployment

In the year to February 1992, the number of unemployed persons aged 15 to 69 years with a post-school qualification increased by 75,300 or 28 per cent while those in this group without post-school qualifications increased by 110,200 or 23 per cent.

The number of employed persons with a post-school qualification increased by 78,000 or 2 per cent while those in this group without post-school qualifications recorded a decrease of 159,400 or 4 per cent.

Persons not in the labour force with post-school qualifications increased by 27,100 or 3 per cent and those without post-school qualifications showed an increase of 42,500 or 2 per cent. These are among the findings of the latest annual survey of labour force status and educational attainment.

In February 1992, 42 per cent (5,076,500) of the population aged 15 to 69 had at least one post-school qualification, an increase of 4 percentage points since 1987. This comprised 1,139,500 persons with a degree, 1,620,200 with trade qualifications, 2,272,800 with a certificate or diploma and 44,000 with some other type of post-school qualification.

Conversely, the estimate of people without post-school qualifications (6,485,200) has dropped from 57 per cent to 53 per cent since 1987. Those persons still at school has remained constant at around 5 per cent.

Some other characteristics of the 5,076,500 persons with post-school qualifications include:

- 75 per cent were employed;
- 69 per cent were married;
- 44 per cent had obtained their qualification since 1981;
- 29 per cent were born overseas; and
- 16 per cent had gained their qualifications overseas.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF PERSONS AGED 15 TO 69  
(<sup>'000</sup>)

	February	
	1987	1992
With post-school qualifications	4,240.8	5,076.5
Degree	816.6	1,139.5
Trade Qualification	1,527.7	1,620.2
Certificate or diploma	1,854.8	2,272.8
Other	41.7	44.0
Without post-school qualifications	6,334.3	6,485.2
Still at school	525.0	593.4
<i>All persons</i>	<i>11,100.1</i>	<i>12,155.2</i>

For further information, order the publication *Labour Force Status and Educational Attainment, Australia* (6235.0), or contact Nicolle Wittmann (06) 252 6578.

## Labour force participation remains steady

An estimated 9.3 million persons aged between 15 and 69 had been in the labour force, that is, either worked or looked for work, at some time during the year ending March 1992. The proportion of persons participating in the labour force has remained steady at 77 per cent since the year ending March 1990.

The results of the Labour Force Experience survey also showed that of the 12,154,700 Australian residents aged 15 to 69 in March 1992 -

- ☐ 8,545,200 persons (70%) had worked at some time during the year;
- ☐ 1,971,800 persons (16%) had looked for work at some time during the year;
- ☐ 5,230,600 persons (43%) were not in the labour force at some time during the year.

Of those who had worked at some time during the year, some 84 per cent of males had worked all their weeks on a full-time basis compared with 52 per cent of females. Some 67 per cent of persons who had worked at some time during the year had worked all 52 weeks.

Of the 1,971,800 persons who looked for work at some time during the year, one in five had looked for work for all 52 weeks, while two in five had looked for work for less than 13 weeks. Some 19 per cent of those who looked for work at some time had more than one spell of looking for work during the year.

More than half (55%) of the 5.2 million persons who were not in the labour force at some time during the year ending March 1992, did not work or look for work at any time during that year. Some 41 per cent of these reported 'home duties/childcare' as their main activity when not in the labour force, and a further 21 per cent reported 'attending an educational institution' as their main activity.

*For further information, order the publication Labour Force Experience, Australia (6206.0), or contact Jenny Poulton (06) 252 6661.*

## More Australians work at home

The number of Australian workers employed at home has risen by 15 per cent in the three years since 1989, according to an Australian Bureau of Statistics survey conducted in March 1992. In the same period, total employment grew by only 0.3 per cent.

In March 1992, 307,900 employed people were employed at home — that is, they had jobs in which they work more hours at home than away from home. These workers represent four per cent of all employed people. In April 1989, 266,600 people were employed at home (3.5% of all employed persons).

Of all people employed at home, the number of females (206,700) was more than double the number of males (101,200).

Those in older age groups were more likely to be employed at home than younger persons, with eight per cent of employed persons aged 55 and over employed at home and less than one per cent of employed persons aged 15 to 24 employed at home.

The most common reason for working at home was to open or operate own family business. The two most common reasons for females being employed at home were to open or operate own family business (26% of all females employed at home), and because children were too young or they preferred to look after them (23%).

The largest occupation group was clerks (39%), with 94 per cent being women. There were more males than females employed at home in the occupation groups managers and administrators, professionals and tradespersons.

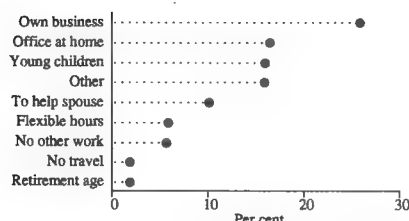
Some 63 per cent (193,300) of all persons employed at home were employers or self-employed. The remaining 112,400 were employees.

Of employees employed at home:

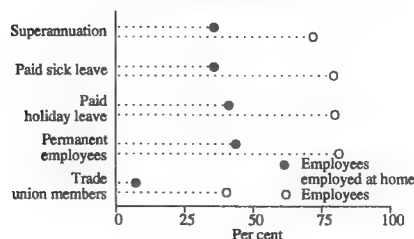
- ☐ 36 per cent were covered by superannuation provided by their current employer, compared with 72 per cent of all employees
- ☐ 44 per cent were permanent employees, compared with 82 per cent of all employees
- ☐ 7 per cent were members of a trade union, compared with 41 per cent of all employees.

For further information, order the publication *Persons Employed at Home, Australia* (6275.0), or contact Jenny Poulton (06) 252 6661.

**PEOPLE EMPLOYED AT HOME**  
Main reason began working at home

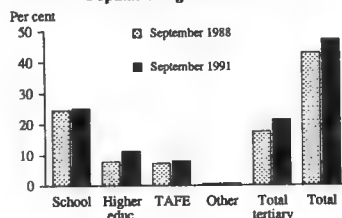


**SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF EMPLOYEES**



## Numbers in post-compulsory education top two million

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION ATTENDANCE  
Population aged 15 to 24



In May 1992, 2,006,600 or 17 per cent of the population aged 15 to 64 were attending a school or tertiary educational institution, according to the latest ABS annual figures on transition from education to work.

Over the five years to May 1992, the number of students has risen by 394,600 (24%). The increase in attendance at higher education institutions was 231,200 (57%) with an increase of 74,000 (16%) at TAFEs.

The survey shows that 384,200 persons were reported as having left full-time education during the period 1991 to May 1992. Of these, 65 per cent (249,500) were employed at May 1992 and 26 per cent (100,000) were unemployed. The 1987 figure for full-time school leavers was 194,500 while the 1992 figure of 149,900, a decrease of 44,600 or 23 per cent (i.e. more school students continued full-time study). The number of leavers from tertiary institutions, on the other hand, has increased by 99,600 (74%) since 1987.

The figures show that, at the time of the survey, 1,006,300 students were employed (546,700 on a full-time basis) and a further 159,900 were unemployed. The remaining 840,400 students were not in the labour force.

Educational status of 19 and 22 year olds at May 1992 was:

- ☐ 50 per cent of 19 year olds (140,500) were attending an educational institution, 10 per cent (29,400) were not attending but already held a post-school qualification and 40 per cent (113,000) were without post-school qualifications and were not attending
- ☐ 25 per cent of 22 year olds (69,900) were attending an educational institution, 36 per cent (100,000) were not attending but held a post-school qualification and 39 per cent (110,700) were without post-school qualifications and were not attending.

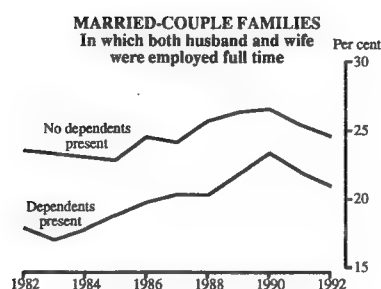
The estimated number of apprentices rose from 139,700 in May 1987 to 175,500 in May 1989, then decreased to 137,000 in May 1992. The current estimate of first year apprentices (28,300) is 27 per cent less than in May 1987 and 50 per cent less than in May 1989.

EDUCATIONAL ATTENDANCE AND LABOUR FORCE STATUS, MAY 1992  
Persons aged 15 to 64  
('000)

In May 1992	Employed	Unemployed	Not in the labour force	Total
Full-time	366	95	752	1,213
Part-time	640	65	89	794
Not attending	6,575	758	2,247	9,579
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,581</b>	<b>918</b>	<b>3,087</b>	<b>11,586</b>

For further information, order the publication *Transition from Education to Work*, Australia (6227.0), or contact Nicolle Wittmann (06) 252 6578.

## Unemployment and families



In June 1992 there were 324,700 married-couple families in Australia in which one or both spouses were unemployed, an increase of 53,600 or 20 per cent on June 1991. Of these families, 60 per cent had dependents present. These estimates were compiled from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' June *Labour Force Survey*.

Some 46 per cent of married-couple families had both partners employed. The proportion was highest in the Northern Territory (64%) and the Australian Capital Territory (62%). In the States, the proportions ranged from 42 per cent in Tasmania to 47 per cent in Western Australia.

Of the 228,900 married-couple families in which the husband was unemployed, 147,000 (64%) had dependents present. In 78 per cent of these families, the wife was either also unemployed or not in the labour force.

In June 1992, nine per cent of all families were one-parent families with the great majority (88%) of those having a female parent. Some 43 per cent of females who headed a one-parent family were employed, with more than half of those (54%) in full-time employment. Male parents were employed in 68 per cent of instances, with 88 per cent of those being in full-time employment.

**ONE-PARENT FAMILIES AND THE LABOUR FORCE**  
(\*000 families)

One-parent families	Parent					Total
	Employed			Unem- ployed	Not in the labour force	
	F/time	P/time	Total			
With a male parent						
1989	28.0	2.0	30.0	2.0	5.5	37.4
1990	32.2	2.4	34.6	1.6	10.2	46.4
1991	31.9	1.8	33.8	4.8	9.8	48.3
1992	29.0	3.8	32.8	3.8	12.0	48.5
With a female parent						
1989	74.4	61.5	135.9	16.2	140.7	292.9
1990	82.0	60.3	142.3	22.2	150.2	314.7
1991	82.2	64.3	146.5	23.8	164.9	335.2
1992	83.9	71.7	155.6	33.7	174.4	363.6

For one-parent families in which the parent was unemployed, 24 per cent of the parents had been unemployed for one year or longer.

Just over two million persons were either living alone or in households where they were not members of a family. Of these persons 61 per cent lived alone. An estimated 40 per cent of persons who were not members of a family and were living alone were employed. For persons who were not members of a family and were not living alone, 70 per cent were employed.

For further information, order the publication *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families, Australia* (6224.0), or contact Don Clark (06) 252 6018.

## Unemployment rates compared

In June 1992, Australia's unemployment rate of 11.1 per cent was the second highest amongst eight major Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries.

Canada had the highest unemployment rate (11.6%) while France also recorded an unemployment rate above 10 per cent in June 1992. The lowest rates recorded in June 1992 were 2.2 per cent and 4.7 per cent in Japan and western Germany (see note to table) respectively.

These are among the findings of a United States Bureau of Labor Statistics study of standardised civilian labour force data in eight OECD countries for the last twenty years.

Between the March quarter 1990 when unemployment generally started rising again, and the June quarter 1992, Australia experienced the largest rise in its unemployment rate (4.5 percentage points).

Sweden and Canada also experienced large increases in their unemployment rates (3.8 percentage points) although the rate for Sweden more than trebled from 1.3 per cent in the March quarter 1990 to 5.1 per cent in the June quarter 1992.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES  
Seasonally adjusted

Period	Australia	Canada	France	Germany*	Japan	Sweden	UK	USA
1989-90								
Mar qtr	6.2	7.5	9.2	5.4	2.1	1.3	6.7	5.2
Jun qtr	6.5	7.5	9.1	5.3	2.1	1.4	6.8	5.3
1990-91								
Sep qtr	7.2	8.3	9.1	5.1	2.1	1.5	6.9	5.6
Dec qtr	8.0	9.1	9.2	4.8	2.2	1.8	7.3	5.9
Mar qtr	8.7	10.2	9.4	4.6	2.1	2.1	8.2	6.5
Jun qtr	9.4	10.3	9.8	4.5	2.1	2.6	9.2	6.8
1991-92								
Sep qtr	9.9	10.4	10.0	4.6	2.2	2.8	10.0	6.8
Dec qtr	10.4	10.3	10.2	4.5	2.2	3.2	10.3	6.9
Mar qtr	10.5	10.7	10.0	4.4	2.1	3.6	9.6	7.2
Jun qtr	10.7	11.3	10.2	4.6	2.1	5.1	9.7	7.5
April	10.4	11.0	10.2	4.5	2.0	4.5	10.4	7.2
May	10.6	11.2	10.2	4.6	2.1	5.0	10.5	7.5
June	11.1	11.6	10.3	4.7	2.2	6.0	9.8	7.8

\*Refers to western Germany (Federal Republic of Germany before the unification of Germany).

Other findings from the twenty year study of unemployment rates in the eight selected countries include:

- ☐ Japan has maintained a very low unemployment rate over the last twenty years. The rate rose to 2.0 per cent in 1976 and has remained between 2 and 3 per cent since.
- ☐ Sweden also has had a relatively low unemployment rate over most of the last twenty years. The rate did not exceed 3.5 per cent until the March Quarter 1992 and for a substantial period between 1987 and 1991, the rate was between 1 and 2 per cent. The United States

and western Germany are the only other countries where the unemployment rate has remained below 10 per cent since 1972.

- The highest annual average unemployment rate since 1972 was 11.8 per cent, recorded by Canada in 1983 and the United Kingdom in 1983 and 1984. The lowest rate recorded was 0.7 per cent in 1972 and 1973 by the then Federal Republic of Germany.
- Since the September Quarter 1990, western Germany's unemployment rate has fallen from 5.4 per cent to 4.6 per cent. The rate for all other countries in the study has risen over this period (apart from Japan's which has remained steady).

*For further information about the data available from the Labour Force Survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, contact Heather Crawford (06) 252 6525.*



## More unemployed prepared to move to obtain a job

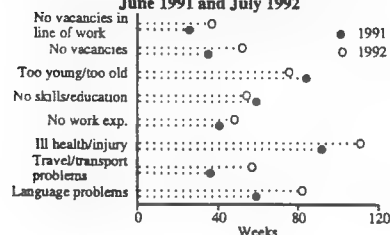
In July 1992, a greater proportion of persons were prepared to move either interstate or intrastate, if they were offered a suitable job, than recorded at any time in the last 10 years.

Almost one-third (32%) of the 900,000 unemployed persons (excluding the small number who were 'stood down') would move interstate if offered a suitable job. A further 55 per cent would not move, and the remainder were unsure about moving. Some 45 per cent of unemployed persons would move to a different part of their State while 40 per cent were not prepared to move intrastate. By comparison, in June 1991, 29 per cent of unemployed persons were prepared to move interstate, while 43 per cent would have moved intrastate.

MAIN DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING WORK  
Per cent

	Age group						Total
	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+	
No vacancies at all	38.5	31.9	31.9	33.6	27.2	18.8	31.9
No vacancies in line of work	7.8	15.0	21.2	22.0	21.0	14.5	17.1
Considered too young or too old by employers	9.5	8.1	4.4	10.7	30.5	53.8	13.8
Lacked necessary skills/education	13.9	14.6	9.5	6.4	3.5	1.4	9.5
Insufficient work experience	13.8	13.7	6.9	5.0	0.5	0.0	8.0
Own ill health or injury	1.6	3.1	4.5	5.4	6.5	6.8	4.2
Too far to travel/transport problems	5.2	4.5	5.8	2.4	0.8	0.5	3.9
Language difficulties	0.2	0.7	4.4	4.0	3.6	2.9	2.6
Other difficulties	4.3	6.3	8.3	7.4	2.9	0.0	5.8
No difficulties reported	5.2	2.0	3.0	3.1	3.5	1.1	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

AVERAGE DURATION OF UNEMPLOYMENT  
By selected main difficulties in finding work  
June 1991 and July 1992



'No vacancies' was reported as the most common difficulty in finding work by all age groups, except those aged 55 and over. For persons aged less than 55 years, 'no vacancies' accounted for approximately half of the reported difficulties in each age group, ranging from 46 per cent of those aged 15-19 to 56 per cent of those aged 35-44. For persons aged 55 and over, the main difficulty was 'considered too young or too old by employers' (54%), followed by 'no vacancies' (33%). Only 3 per cent of persons reported that they had no difficulties in finding work, although more younger persons reported 'no difficulties' (5% of those aged 15-19 compared with 1% of those aged 55 and over).

In July 1992, the average duration of unemployment was 55 weeks, an increase of 11 weeks since June 1991. The average duration of unemployment varied according to the main difficulty in finding work and educational attainment.

The main difficulty in finding work with the longest average duration of unemployment was for 'own ill health or disability' — 111 weeks, and the difficulty with the shortest average duration was 'no vacancies in line of work' — 38 weeks.

Persons without post-school qualifications had been unemployed for 8 weeks more on average than those with post-school qualifications (59 weeks compared to 51 weeks). Unemployed persons who did not attend the highest level of secondary school available had an average duration of unemployment of 64 weeks.

As at July 1992, there were 331,300 persons whose current period of unemployment was one year or more. For this group, who represented 37 per cent of total unemployed, the most common reported difficulties in finding work were 'No vacancies either in line of work or at all' and 'Considered too young or too old by employers'.

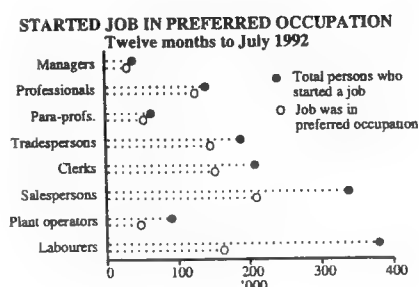
*For further information, order the publication Job Search Experience of Unemployed Persons, Australia (6222.0), or contact Mark Patton (06) 252 7204.*

## Fewer job starters in 1991-92

There were 1,453,000 people who started a job for wages or salary in the twelve months to July 1992. Most of these people (71%) had been out of work before starting their job, while 29 per cent changed employer to begin a new job.

These results come from an Australian Bureau of Statistics survey of job search experience, conducted in July 1992. Compared with July 1990, when the previous survey was conducted, 23 per cent fewer people started a job in the year ended July 1992. There was a 4 per cent drop in the number starting a job after being out of work, and a 48 per cent fall in the number who changed employer to start a job.

There were a further 970,800 people who had looked for, but not started, a job for wages or salary in the year to July 1992 — substantially higher (88%) than the July 1990 estimate of 515,600.



**JOB SEARCH EXPERIENCE**  
(<sup>'000</sup>)

	Year ended July		Percentage change
	1990	1992	
Started a job	1880.3	1453.0	- 22.7
Out of work beforehand	1069.0	1029.2	- 3.7
Changed employer	811.3	423.8	- 47.8
Looked for but had not started a job	515.6	970.8	88.3

Of the people who started a job for wages or salary in 1991-92:

- ☐ 39 per cent obtained their job by approaching the employer, without knowing that the job was available;
- ☐ 37 per cent approached the employer to obtain a job they knew was available; and
- ☐ 24 per cent of jobs had been obtained as a result of the employer approaching the jobseeker

The proportion of persons starting a job in their preferred occupation (65% overall) varied according to a number of characteristics. Persons who started a job as professionals were most likely to be in their preferred occupation (90%) followed by para-professionals (84%).

Persons aged 45 to 54 were most likely to be in their preferred occupation (71%), while persons aged 15 to 19 were least likely to be in their preferred occupation (55%).

People who changed employer to start their job were more likely to be working in their preferred occupation (77%) than those who were out of work prior to starting the job (59%).

For further information, order the publication *Successful and Unsuccessful Job Search Experience*, Australia (6245.0), or contact Mark Patton (06) 252 7204.

## Growth in self-employed workers

Recent labour force survey results show that the number of self-employed persons has continued to grow in contrast to the general fall in the number of employed wage and salary earners.

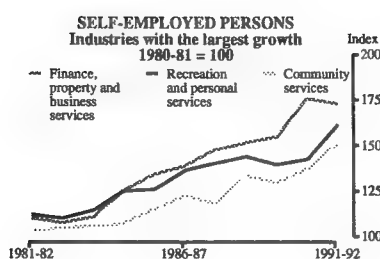
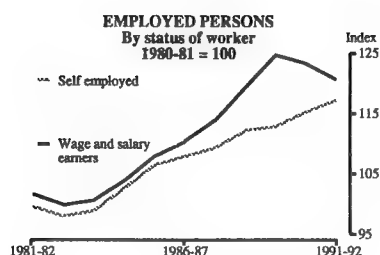
In August 1992, there were 1,206,500 persons who were self-employed and a further 6,397,600 persons who reported that they were wage and salary earners. The number of wage and salary earners has declined from its peak of 6,747,400 in May 1990, whereas the number of self-employed persons is at the highest level recorded.

Self-employed persons are defined as employers with employees, and self-employed persons without employees, provided that there is no incorporated company involved.

Data about these forms of employment are collected each quarter by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the results published in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0) under the item *Status of Worker*.

Between August 1980 and August 1992, the number of self-employed persons rose by 19 per cent, with the strongest growth occurring since 1984-85. On a financial year annual average basis, the only falls in the number of self-employed persons occurred in the 1981-82 and 1982-83 financial years. However, these falls have been followed by continuing growth. For wage and salary earners the strong growth during the latter half of the 1980s has been followed by a decline during the most recent economic downturn.

As the table shows, the wholesale and retail trade and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industries have maintained the largest shares of the self-employed over the 12-year period under review. However, industry divisions with the most prominent growth have been Finance, property and business services; Recreation, personal and other services; and Community services.

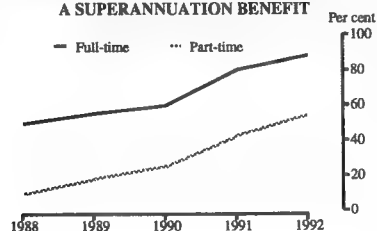


**SELF-EMPLOYED PERSONS BY INDUSTRY**  
(‘000)

	August 1980	August 1986	August 1992
Wholesale and retail trade	273.9	255.9	276.5
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	267.1	269.7	240.0
Construction	164.1	178.3	219.3
Finance, property and business services	71.3	101.9	134.8
Recreation, personal and other services	75.8	103.7	126.8
Transport and storage	60.0	72.8	75.0
Manufacturing	54.2	62.0	70.5
Community services	43.3	46.7	60.9
Other industries	5.3	4.8	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,015.0</b>	<b>1,095.8</b>	<b>1,206.5</b>

## Superannuation coverage doubled in four years

PROPORTION OF ALL EMPLOYEES RECEIVING A SUPERANNUATION BENEFIT



The number of employees reporting that they were covered by a superannuation scheme was 5,216,000 or 82 per cent of all employees in August 1992. This includes those employees covered by schemes other than those arranged or provided by their current employer. The proportion of all employees covered by superannuation has doubled between August 1988 and August 1992.

In August 1992, 4,959,400 or 80 per cent of employees received superannuation coverage as an employment benefit in their main job. The proportion of full-time employees who received superannuation coverage as an employment benefit was 88 per cent, an increase from 80 per cent in July 1991, and 49 per cent in August 1988.

The proportion of part-time employees who received superannuation coverage as an employment benefit has increased to 54 per cent in August 1992, rising from 42 per cent in July 1991, and 10 per cent in August 1988.

EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS  
Percentage of employees receiving benefits in main job

	Working full-time		Working part-time		All employees	
	1988	1992	1988	1992	1988	1992
Superannuation	49	88	10	54	42	80
Holiday leave	92	92	31	33	82	78
Sick leave	92	91	31	33	81	78
Long-service leave	74	78	23	26	65	67
Goods and services	15	17	15	19	15	18
Transport	18	20	6	6	16	17
Telephone	10	10	4	4	9	8
Holiday expenses	4	5	1	1	4	4
Medical	4	4	1	1	3	3

Over the past five years, the proportion of full-time employees receiving sick leave benefits and the proportion of employees receiving holiday leave benefits has remained within the 91 to 93 per cent range. For those working part-time, the proportion receiving these benefits has increased slightly from 31 per cent in August 1988 to 33 per cent in August 1992.

Public sector employees who worked full-time in their main job had a higher incidence of the most common employment benefits than their private sector counterparts. These benefits include holiday leave (98% and 89% respectively), sick leave (98% and 88%), superannuation (95% and 85%) and long-service leave (95% and 71%).

Private sector employees who were full-time in their main job were more likely to have received benefits other than the standard benefits of leave and superannuation. Included amongst these were goods and services (22% for private sector employees and 8% for public sector employees) and transport (23% and 13% respectively).

For further information, order the publication *Employment Benefits, Australia*(6334.0), or contact Jon Havelock (06) 252 6503.

## Trade union membership continues slow decline

In August 1992, 2,508,800 employees aged 15 and over were members of a trade union in connection with their main job.

Over the past 6 years, the proportion of employees who were trade union members has fallen 6 percentage points, from 46 per cent in August 1986 to 40 per cent in August 1992. The rate of decline of membership has slowed over the past four years, falling one percentage point between August 1988 and August 1990 and also between August 1990 and August 1992.

The fall of one percentage point from 41 per cent in August 1990 to 40 per cent in August 1992 partly reflects the changing full-time/part-time pattern of Australia's employed labour force. Membership rates for full-time employees have been consistently much higher than membership rates for part-time employees. In August 1992, 44 per cent of full-time employees and 25 per cent of part-time employees were trade union members.

Male full-time employees reported higher trade union membership (46%) compared with female full-time employees (41%). In contrast, the membership rate for female part-time employees (26%) was higher than the rate for male part-time employees (22%).

EMPLOYEES WHO WERE TRADE UNION MEMBERS  
(<sup>'000</sup>)

	August 1986		August 1992	
	Number of members ( <sup>'000</sup> )	Proportion of employees who were trade union members (%)	Number of members ( <sup>'000</sup> )	Proportion of employees who were trade union members (%)
Males	1,685.1	50	1,536.1	43
Females	908.8	39	972.7	35
Persons	2,593.9	46	2,508.8	40

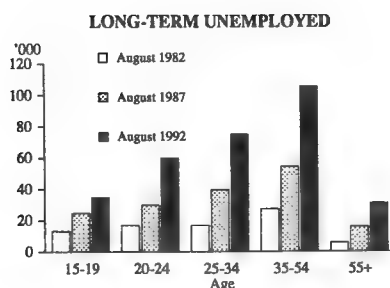
Trade union membership rates for full-time employees generally increased from 21 per cent for those aged 15 to 19, up to slightly greater than 50 per cent for those in the age groups in the range 45 to 64 years.

Over the six year period from August 1986 to August 1992, membership rates declined in all industries except Public administration and defence. The largest falls were recorded in the Mining (-14 percentage points), Transport and storage (-9 percentage points) and Manufacturing (-7 percentage points) industries.

Trade union members had greater levels of superannuation coverage than non-members within all industry groups. Industries with higher proportions of trade union membership also tend to have higher levels of superannuation coverage. Of trade union members, superannuation coverage was lowest in the Wholesale and retail trade industry group (75% covered) and highest in the Communication industry group (99.5%).

For more information, order the publication *Trade Union Members, Australia (6325.0)*, or contact Jon Havelock (06) 252 6503.

## Older males worst hit by long-term unemployment



Long-term unemployment (i.e. people unemployed for 52 weeks or more) increased markedly in the twelve months to August 1992.

Of the 906,400 people who were unemployed in August 1992, 313,200 (35%) had been unemployed for 52 weeks or more, an increase of 112,200 since August 1991. Of the long-term unemployed, 43 per cent had been looking for work for two years or more.

Some 56 per cent of people unemployed long term were aged under 35 years while people in this age group comprised 65 per cent of all unemployed persons.

These findings are among the results of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' monthly Labour Force Survey and published in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0). More detailed estimates of the characteristics of the long-term unemployed are available from a number of supplementary surveys conducted by the ABS.

**UNEMPLOYED PERSONS**  
(<sup>'000</sup>)

	Long-term unemployed			Total unemployed		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
August 1982	52.8	35.0	87.7 (19%)	271.7	189.7	461.4
1987	115.7	56.3	172.0 (29%)	347.1	255.0	602.0
1992	212.7	100.5	313.2 (35%)	564.4	342.0	906.4

Numbers in brackets show long term unemployed as a percentage of total unemployed.

Other facts about the long-term unemployed in August 1992 include:

- ☐ 68 per cent were males (whereas males comprised 62% of all unemployed persons);
- ☐ 64 per cent had not held a full-time job (lasting at least two weeks) in the last two years;
- ☐ 11 per cent were looking for their first full-time job;
- ☐ 10 per cent had last worked full time for two weeks or more in the last two years in the manufacturing industry;
- ☐ 13 per cent had last worked full time for two weeks or more in the last two years as labourers and related workers while 7 per cent had worked as tradespersons; and
- ☐ Of unemployed males aged 35 years and over, 45 per cent were among the long-term unemployed, compared with 40 per cent for females in the same age group. For unemployed males aged 25 to 34 years, 38 per cent were long-term unemployed, and for females the comparable figure was 28 per cent.

For further information, order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0), or contact Heather Crawford (06) 252 6525.

## Number of discouraged jobseekers continues to rise



The number of discouraged jobseekers has continued to rise, matching the trend in the number of unemployed persons. In September 1992, there were 145,600 discouraged jobseekers - an increase of 5 per cent compared with September 1991. The number of unemployed persons increased by 7 per cent over the same period to 925,300 persons in September 1992.

Discouraged jobseekers are those persons who could start work, but are not actively seeking work because they believe that they could not get a job. The main reasons given by discouraged jobseekers for not actively looking for work were 'No jobs in locality or line of work' (31%), 'No jobs at all' (26%) and 'Considered too young or old by employers' (26%).

Since September 1988, there has been an increase of 67 per cent in the number of unemployed persons. The number of discouraged jobseekers has increased similarly, rising 74 per cent between September 1988 and September 1992. The year ending September 1991 saw the largest annual increase in discouraged jobseekers (up 37%) and the largest annual increase in the number of unemployed persons (up 38%).

In total, 3,738,100 persons aged 15 to 69 were not in the labour force at September 1992. These persons comprised 30 per cent of the civilian population in this age range. Two thirds of those not in the labour force were female.

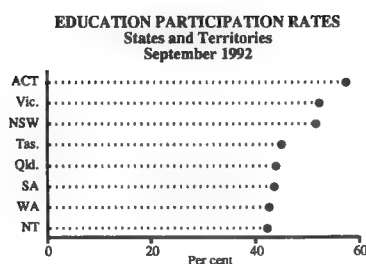
Persons who were neither employed nor unemployed but wanted to work and either sought work or were available to start work within four weeks, are considered to be marginally attached to the labour force. These persons are potential members of the labour force and might be expected to join, in different circumstances. There were 846,400 of them in September 1992, of whom:

- ☐ 43 per cent intended to look for work in the next 12 months
- ☐ 67 per cent would prefer part-time work if returning to the labour force
- ☐ the main reason for not seeking work was 'childcare' for 33 per cent of females and 'attending an educational institution' for 36 per cent of males.

*For further information, order the publication Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia (6220.0), or contact Jenny Poulton (06) 252 6661.*



## Continuing move to full-time study as education participation rises



A survey of educational attendance showed that 49 per cent (1,334,900) of 15 to 24 year olds were attending either a school or a tertiary educational institution in September 1992.

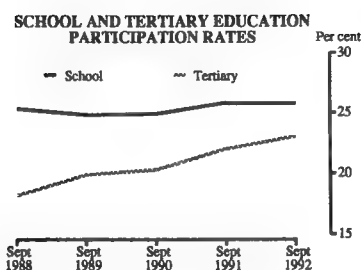
Since the first survey on this topic was run in September 1988, school attendance has grown by 3 per cent (21,300) and tertiary attendance by 28 per cent (139,000). Full-time attendance at tertiary institutions has risen by 52 per cent (138,000).

Of the 15 to 24 year old students surveyed in September 1992:

- ☐ 83 per cent were attending full-time;
- ☐ 51 per cent were males (685,300) and 49 per cent (649,600) females; and
- ☐ 51 per cent (680,000) were not in the labour force, 40 per cent (539,700) were employed and 9 per cent (115,200) were unemployed.

**EDUCATIONAL ATTENDANCE AND TYPE OF INSTITUTION**  
September 1988 and 1992  
Persons aged 15 to 24  
('000)

Type of institution	1988	1992
Attending school	683.5	704.8
Attending tertiary	491.1	630.1
Full-time	266.9	404.9
Part-time	224.2	225.2
Total attending	1,174.6	1,334.9
All persons	2,701.6	2,735.5



From September 1988 to September 1992 the number of 15 to 24 year olds attending an educational institution has increased steadily from 1,174,600 to 1,334,900 — this represents a 6 percentage point increase in the national education participation rate from 43 to 49 per cent over the five surveys. The participation rates of 18 and 21 year olds have increased by 7 and 10 percentage points, respectively, over this period.

**EDUCATION PARTICIPATION RATES BY SELECTED AGES,**  
SEPTEMBER 1988 TO 1992  
(Per cent)

Age (years)	September				
	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
15	93	95	95	96	96
18	49	50	52	58	56
21	22	26	27	28	32
24	14	12	13	17	16

For further information, order the publication *Participation in Education, Australia* (6272.0), or contact Nicole Wittmann (06) 252 6578.

## Number of job leavers decreasing

The number of unemployed persons who were job leavers (i.e. unemployed persons who left their last full-time job voluntarily) has been falling since April 1991.

Of unemployed persons in October 1992, there were 121,600 job leavers. This represents a decrease of 23 per cent from April 1991 when the number of unemployed job leavers peaked at 158,400. The number of male job leavers has decreased by 14,100 to 69,800 since April 1991 and for females, job leavers have fallen by 22,800 to 51,700.

Job leavers accounted for 13 per cent of unemployed persons in October 1992 compared with 17 per cent in October 1991 and 19 per cent in April 1991.

These findings are among the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and published in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

UNEMPLOYED PERSONS  
(<sup>'000</sup>)

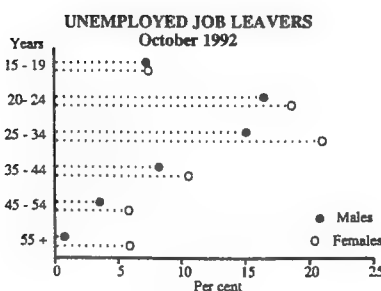
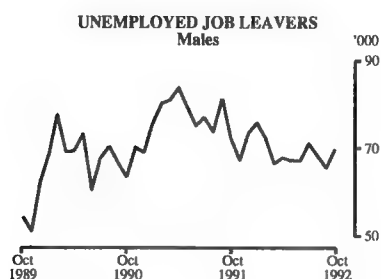
October	Job leavers			Total unemployed		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
1989	54.3	48.8	103.1	243.2	214.1	457.4
1990	63.5	51.5	114.9	354.5	252.5	607.0
1991	72.1	62.3	134.4	494.5	307.1	801.6
1992	69.8	51.7	121.6	557.1	345.4	902.5

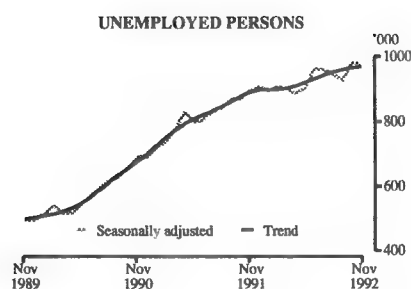
In addition to those job leavers who join the ranks of the unemployed, a significant number of job leavers withdraw from the labour force either temporarily or with no intention of looking for work again. A survey conducted by the ABS in April 1991 showed that there were 209,600 job leavers who had left the labour force in the previous twelve months. Of those, 60 per cent intended to return to the labour force.

Other features of unemployed job leavers in October 1992 include:

- ☐ 71 per cent were less than 35 years of age;
- ☐ 32 per cent of male job leavers had last worked full-time for two weeks or more as labourers and related workers while 36 per cent of female job leavers had last worked full time for two weeks or more as salespersons and personal service workers;
- ☐ 24 per cent of male job leavers and 27 per cent of female job leavers had last worked full-time for two weeks or more in the wholesale and retail trade industry.

For further information, order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0), or contact Heather Crawford (06) 252 6525.





## Full-time employment still falling

The trend estimate of full-time employment fell again in November 1992, continuing the decline observed since July 1990. However, the rate of decline is markedly slower now than at the beginning of 1992. The underlying trend in total employment is also falling following a period of increase between April and August 1992. Trend estimates of unemployment continue to increase while the trend unemployment rate was steady after increasing slightly in each of the last seven months.

### Employment

The November 1992 seasonally adjusted estimate of employed persons was 7,636,100, a fall of 78,400 since October. Full-time employment fell by 15,700 to 5,844,600. Male full-time employment fell by 22,100 to 3,969,700, while the number of females employed full time increased slightly to 1,874,800. Part-time employment fell by 62,600 to 1,791,600, with male and female part-time employment falling by 30,200 and 32,400 respectively.

### Unemployment

The seasonally adjusted estimate of unemployed persons for November was 979,900, almost unchanged since October. For males, unemployment rose by 9,300 to 611,200 with the number of males seeking full-time work increasing by 11,700. Female unemployment fell by 8,900 to 368,600, with a fall of 10,800 in the number of adult females seeking full-time work.

The seasonally adjusted estimate of the unemployment rate was 11.4 per cent, compared with 11.3 per cent in October. For males, the unemployment rate rose by 0.3 percentage points to 12.2 per cent while for females, the rate fell slightly to 10.2 per cent.

### Participation rate

The seasonally adjusted estimate of the labour force participation rate was 62.6 per cent, a fall of 0.6 percentage points since October. For males, the rate fell by 0.7 percentage points to 73.9 per cent, while for females, the rate fell by 0.6 percentage points to 51.6 per cent.

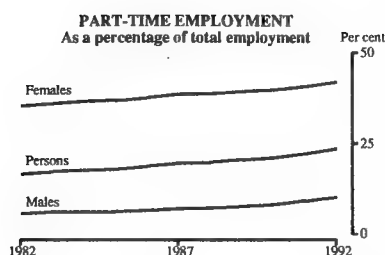
LABOUR FORCE SURVEY ESTIMATES  
Seasonally adjusted

	Employed			Un- employed	Unemploy- ment rate	Particip- ation rate
	Full-time workers	Part-time workers	Total — '000 —			
1992						
June	5,856.8	1,834.4	7,691.1	963.4	11.1	63.2
July	5,891.9	1,857.3	7,749.2	959.6	11.0	63.5
August	5,861.6	1,870.0	7,731.6	947.5	10.9	63.2
September	5,862.5	1,826.0	7,688.4	927.7	10.8	62.7
October	5,860.3	1,854.2	7,714.5	979.5	11.3	63.2
November	5,844.6	1,791.6	7,636.1	979.9	11.4	62.6

For further information order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia*, Preliminary (6202.0), or contact Heather Crawford (06) 252 6525.

**NOTE:** More recent data have been published on these series; labour force data are published monthly.

## How part-time work has expanded



The proportion of employed persons who work part-time has been generally increasing over the last ten years, having risen from 17 per cent in 1982 (annual average) to 24 per cent in 1992. (Part-time workers are defined as employed persons who usually work less than 35 hours per week, and did so during a survey reference week).

The increase reflects the rise in the number of part-time jobs in the period, and the lesser rate of increase in full-time employment up to 1990, followed by a fall in the number of persons employed full time, through to 1992.

The increase in the number of female part-timers contributed the greater share of the overall rise in part-time employment. However, the annual percentage increases in male and female part-time employment were more variable.



Between 1982 and 1990, males employed part time accounted for 23 per cent of the growth in part-time employment. However, in the period 1990 to 1992, 55 per cent of the increase in part-time employment was for males.

This recent higher growth in male part-time employment has meant that females held 75 per cent of part-time employment in 1992, compared with 79 per cent in the early 1980s.

These findings are among the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and published in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

**PART-TIME WORKERS**  
Annual averages

	1982		1987		1992	
	'000	Per cent	'000	Per cent	'000	Per cent
Males	230.2	5.7	300.5	7.0	452.8	10.2
Females	832.6	35.3	1095.5	38.6	1358.6	41.9
Married females	619.8	44.7	796.8	46.5	932.6	46.8
Persons	1062.8	16.6	1396.0	19.6	1811.4	23.5

In terms of overall employment in 1992, female part-timers held 18 per cent of total employment compared with 13 per cent in 1982. For males, the ratios were six per cent in 1992 and four per cent in 1982.

Some 69 per cent of women who were employed part-time in 1992 were married. Married females now hold 51 per cent of total part-time employment, compared with 58 per cent ten years ago.

In December 1992, 32 per cent of all part-time workers reported a preference to work more hours, compared with 29 per cent 12 months earlier. However, only 40 per cent of these persons had actively looked for full-time work in the previous four weeks.

For further information, order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0), or contact Heather Crawford (06) 252 6525.

## Growth in underemployment continues

In December 1992, 68 per cent of part-time workers were satisfied with the number of hours that they worked. The remaining 32 per cent of part-time workers would have preferred to work more hours and as such may be categorised as generally underemployed.

Not all of these underemployed persons were looking for extra work. In December 1992, some 60 per cent of persons employed part time who reported a preference to work more hours had not taken active steps to find full-time work.

For many years the ABS has used the term underemployment to include persons employed part time who would prefer to work more hours and full-time workers who worked less than full-time hours due to economic reasons such as short time and insufficient work. Of the 7,750,100 employed persons in December 1992, 634,700 persons met this general definition of underemployment. Of these, the full-time worker component was 10 per cent.

Underemployment has been rising since 1988, when the annual average was 300,700 underemployed persons (little different from the 1987 average of 306,900 persons). The 1992 average was 591,200, equivalent to an increase of 18 per cent per year over the four year period. This increase has generally coincided with increases in unemployment.

The average underemployment rate in 1992 (the number of underemployed persons divided by the number of persons in the labour force) was 6.9 per cent. The average unemployment rate in 1992 was 10.8 per cent. The sum of these two measures gives an underutilisation rate of 17.7 per cent in 1992, compared with 11.0 per cent in 1988.

**PART-TIME WORKERS**  
Annual averages

Year	<i>Underemployed</i>			<i>Total part-time workers</i>		
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
1988	84.9	178.2	263.0	314.5	1,151.8	1,466.3
1989	85.8	193.9	279.7	348.1	1,237.6	1,585.7
1990	103.7	216.3	320.0	371.0	1,292.0	1,663.0
1991	147.4	270.6	418.0	405.1	1,309.0	1,714.1
1992	189.9	320.4	510.2	452.9	1,358.6	1,811.4

Underemployment, like part-time employment, is mostly associated with employed females. In December 1992, some 62 per cent of underemployed part-time workers were females, whereas 75 per cent of all part-time workers were female.

Male part-time workers are more likely to be underemployed than females although for both groups the proportion of workers who would prefer to work more hours has been increasing markedly in the last four years. In December 1992, 49 per cent of male part-time workers and 27 per cent of female part-time workers were underemployed compared with 34 per cent and 18 per cent respectively in December 1988.

Underemployment was highest among part-time workers in the 20-24 years age group with some 56 per cent preferring to work more hours in December 1992. This ratio decreased for older age groups, falling to 12 per cent of part-time workers aged 55 years and over being underemployed in December 1992.

UNDEREMPLOYED PART-TIME WORKERS BY AGE DECEMBER 1992  
(<sup>'000</sup>)

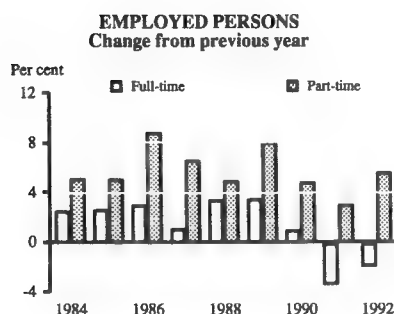
Age	Underemployed			Total part-time workers		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
15-19	56.4	72.8	129.2	123.1	185.4	308.5
20-24	47.6	67.1	114.7	76.6	127.9	204.5
25-34	46.5	63.1	109.7	69.3	292.8	362.1
35-44	26.8	96.3	123.1	47.9	399.2	447.1
45-54	23.1	50.0	73.1	43.6	239.4	283.0
55+	14.6	7.5	22.1	81.9	98.1	180.0

A narrower measure of underemployment is the number of part-time workers who reported that they would prefer to work more hours and had actively looked for full-time work in the previous four weeks. In December 1992, 40 per cent of persons employed part-time who would have preferred to work more hours had actively looked for full-time work, compared with 39 per cent in December 1988.

In December 1992, 36 per cent of all part-time workers who worked 6-10 hours would have preferred to work more hours. (Of the hours worked ranges tabulated, 6-10 hours had the greatest number of underemployed workers.) Of these persons, 45 per cent had actively looked for full-time work. In December 1988, 27 per cent of part-time workers who had worked 6-10 hours would have preferred to work more hours, and of these, 41 per cent had actively looked for full-time work.

For further information, order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0)*, or contact Heather Crawford (06) 252 6525.

## The labour market — 1992 in review



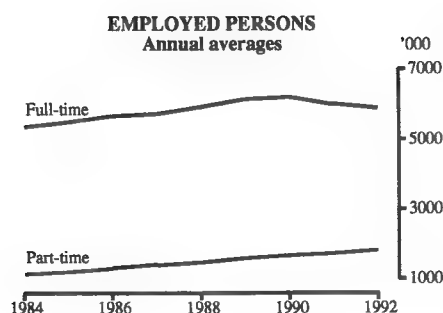
The Australian labour market weakened further during 1992, particularly for full-time jobs. Compared with 1991, average employment fell by 19,500 (0.3%) with full-time employment decreasing by 116,800 (1.9%). Male employment fell by 37,400 (0.8%) with a fall of 85,200 (2.1%) in full-time employment being partly offset by a rise of 47,800 (11.8%) in part-time employment. For females, total employment rose by 17,900 (0.6%) with full-time employment falling by 31,600 (1.7%).

The average number of unemployed people in 1992 rose by 112,100 (13.7%) to 933,100 mainly due to an increase of 106,300 (15.6%) in the number of people seeking full-time work. The rise in unemployment was associated with an increase in the average unemployment rate from 9.6 per cent in 1991 to 10.8 per cent in 1992.

These findings are drawn from the monthly Labour Force Survey, full details of which are published in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

**CIVILIAN LABOUR FORCE ESTIMATES**  
Annual averages

	1990	1991	1992	Change 1991 to 1992	
				('000)	per cent
Employment ('000)	7,872.0	7,713.2	7,693.7	-19.5	-0.3
Full time	6,209.0	5,999.1	5,882.3	-116.8	-1.9
Part time	1,663.0	1,714.1	1,811.4	97.3	5.7
Unemployment ('000)	587.1	821.0	933.1	112.1	13.7
Full time	467.5	680.9	787.2	106.3	15.6
Part time	119.6	140.1	145.9	5.8	4.2
Labour force ('000)	8,459.1	8,534.1	8,626.8	92.7	1.1
Unemployment rate (%)	6.9	9.6	10.8	n.a.	1.2 pts
Participation rate (%)	63.8	63.2	63.0	n.a.	-0.3 pts



Other comparisons of the 1992 labour market with 1991 include:

- ☐ The average unemployment rate for males rose by 1.5 percentage points to 11.4 per cent and for females, it rose by 0.8 percentage points to 10.0 per cent.
- ☐ The average participation rate for males fell from 74.8 per cent to 74.3 per cent while for females, it fell from 52.0 per cent to 51.9 per cent.
- ☐ Although males averaged 25 per cent of total part-time employment in 1992, they accounted for 49 per cent of the increase in part-time employment between 1991 and 1992.
- ☐ The average duration of unemployment increased from 41 weeks in 1991 to 50 weeks in 1992.
- ☐ The average number of long-term unemployed (i.e. persons unemployed for 52 weeks or more) increased by 60 per cent to 313,000, following an increase of 58 per cent between 1990 and 1991.
- ☐ There was an increase of 25,600 in the number of job losers. In contrast, the number of people who left their job voluntarily fell by 17,000.

For further information, order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0), or contact Heather Crawford (06) 252 6525.

## Behind the numbers — some facts about the labour force survey

The Monthly Labour Force Survey is by far the largest household survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Each month the survey records information from more than 63,000 individuals, using a random sample of about 29,000 private dwellings and a (much smaller) number of other dwellings such as hotels and motels.

The sheer size of this monthly exercise yields several advantages, not least of which is a high degree of statistical accuracy. In December 1992, for instance, when the ABS estimate of employed persons was 7.75 million, there was a 95 per cent probability that the true number of employed people in Australia was within just 48,800 of that number.

Such low 'standard errors' clearly indicate that, taking one month with another, the survey reliably reflects national labour market levels, movements and trends.

The Labour Force Survey is also an extremely useful vehicle for collecting data on a wide range of social and economic topics related to the labour market.

In 1992, supplementary topics surveyed along with the core questions included labour force experience, transition from education to work, labour mobility and trade union membership.

The basic labour force data are published in preliminary form fourteen working days after the completion of interviewing, while the results of the supplementary surveys are normally released four to five months afterwards.

The survey is conducted by specially trained interviewers, generally in the two weeks beginning on the Monday between the 6th and 12th of each month. The information obtained relates to the week before the interview (the 'reference week'), and the labour force category to which a person is assigned depends on his or her actual activity during that week.

The survey is designed to enable analysis of the labour force by a number of variables, including sex, age, birthplace, occupation, hours worked and so on. While some of these data are included in the monthly publications, much more detailed information is available from ABS offices in the form of standard and special tabulations and microfiche.

A more comprehensive description of the labour force survey, together with answers to some of the questions most commonly asked about employment and unemployment statistics, may be found in *Information Paper: Measuring Employment and Unemployment* (6279.0), issued in August 1991.

For further information about the labour force survey or the availability of labour force data products and services, contact Ivan Neville (06) 252 6565.



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<b>Electronic Services</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Floppy disk. The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary (6271.0). Preliminary monthly results (equivalent hardcopy 6202.0). <input type="checkbox"/> Special reports may be provided on floppy disk. <input type="checkbox"/> The ABS PC AUSSTATS service provides user-friendly on-line access to a data base which includes data from the Australian Labour Force publications 6202.0 and 6203.0, as well as thousands of other up-to-date time series.
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